

Socialist Standard

Gulf Coast Hurricane
Japan Atom Bombings II
Gate Gourmet
Gypsies: a Problem?
Islam and Socialism

October 2005 Vol. 101 No. 1214 £1

Capitalism's Wash Out

Katrina blows the lid off caring America





Bush and Katrina victims, pages 6-8



Sold out? Gate Gourmet, page 13



A radical read? The Koran, page 15

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October 2005

socialist standard

website: www.worldsocialism.org

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"Calling the action illegal has a significant symbolic and ideological role in giving the impression that striking is criminal and by extension wicked."

Gate Gourmet - Another Union Sell-Out? page 6

Time to Move On

As the Berlin Wall fell and the Kremlin's Empire collapsed in Eastern Europe, Western leaders spoke about a "peace dividend" and how money previously spent on arms would be re-channelled into social programmes; redirected towards the fight against poverty, inequality and ignorance. Some spoke about "the end of history", how capitalism was at last triumphant. Capitalism, at the dawn of a new millennium, had supposedly seen off its rivals and now, left to develop, would bring prosperity to all.

In reality:

- World military spending for 2005: \$1 trillion (or just over \$31,709 per second)
- Number of billionaires in the world: 691
- Number of people malnourished: approx 815 million
- 1 billion people lack access to clean water
- 2.4 billion people lack access to decent sanitation
- 17,280 children die every day from hunger

According to the most recent UN Human Development Report:

- 54 countries are now poorer than they were in 1990, which is when world leaders

made their "peace dividend" claim.

The world's 225 richest individuals, of whom 60 are Americans with total assets of \$311 billion, have a combined wealth of over \$1 trillion - equal to the annual income of the poorest 47 percent of the entire world's population.

- The estimated additional cost of maintaining universal access to basic education, basic health care, reproductive health care, adequate food and clean water and safe sewers for all is roughly \$40 billion a year, or less than 4 percent of the combined wealth of the 225 richest people in the world.



Really moving on: breaking free of the fetters

- The richest fifth of the world's people consumes 86 percent of all goods and services while the poorest fifth consumes just 1.3 percent.

- The United Nations Children's Fund reported in 2005 that one billion children, or half of the world's population of children, suffer from poverty, violent conflict and the scourge of AIDS.

Capitalism may well have advanced the scientific and technological capabilities of humanity to a stage where we can now feasibly establish a world of abundance, a world without waste or want or war. But the facts speak for themselves. There are now more starving, thirsty, homeless and unemployed people on the planet than at any time in human history. Rather than providing for the needs of the world's people, Capitalism stands as a fetter to the full and improved use of the world's productive resources in the service of humanity.

Capitalism need not be the end of history. It is just one station along the railway line of human social development at which we are presently standing. We can move on, progress. By progress, what we mean is socialism, a society based on common ownership, democratic control and production solely for use. Real change is possible, but only if enough of us really do want to move further along the track to where real human history begins.

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Science, socialism and the animal question

inclined to reasoned, evidence-based thinking, tend by and large to support the scientists' point of view, for example in their bitter feud with 'intelligent design' advocates, or in their massive protest against the Bush administration's deliberate distortion of scientific studies for political ends, or in their efforts to overcome religious bigotry which prevents effective vaccination against killer diseases. Sometimes, amid the raving mullahs, the ranting politicians and the grubby interest-groups, the voice of the scientific community can sound like the only quiet note of sanity in the screaming choirs of hell.

There are times, though, when even some scientists start to sound a little reactionary, self-righteous and sanctimonious on their own account. One such instance is the issue of animal rights. Last month the New York Stock Exchange backed out of its agreement to float Life Sciences Research, the struggling US parent of Huntingdon Life Sciences in Cambridgeshire, with just 45 minutes to go before trading began. No reason was given, but media pundits and insiders were unanimous that the NYSE pulled out because of animal rights pressure. Scientists were duly aghast, and cries of 'Shame!' echoed round the research laboratories. Leader columns in the scientific press expressed serious concern at how important research was once again being hampered by wild-eyed ideologues without a science GCSE or a bath between them.

But do the scientists have any right to such a moral high ground? It's true that HLS staff have received relentless harassment including violence and threats against themselves and their families, but the egregious and quasi-terrorist tactics adopted by some animal liberationists do not in turn justify wholesale uncritical support for animal research. Scientists tend to be very defensive about animal research, but their arguments, that such research is always necessary, tightly controlled, responsible and largely painless, are at best questionable and sometimes plain wrong, depending as they do on an idealized representation of scientific research as it is supposed to be, and not as it actually exists in the buck-hungry world of capitalist corporations.

To be fair, animal rights activists can propagate myths about research which confuse the issue (for a list, see <http://www.rds-online.org.uk>). However, scientists do not help their own case with simplistic no-brainer dilemmas like 'your dog, or your son', which imply that all testing is for the common good and which gloss over the large proportion of experiments done for cosmetics, food colourings, weedkillers and other non-health-related products. While scientists protest loudly, and rightly, against violent intimidation by activists, they are more likely to shrug mildly at undercover reports of 'exceptional' or 'aberrational' behaviour among

Scientists don't always find it easy to get on with the public. Aside from the abstruse and technical nature of their work, which inevitably creates a natural comprehension gap, there are political, religious and ideological factors which all too often cause rifts between science and the general public.

Socialists, being

HLS staff, including videos of them punching and kicking animals for amusement, and falsifying test reports. Nor are they impressed with references to animal testing's long list of heroic failures, including thalidomide and, more recently, seroxat. How many more disasters would we have had without animal testing, they ask, knowing there is no answer. 4000 drugs are undergoing animal testing in Britain today, of which only ten percent will come to market, but scientists who point to this as a sign of the importance of testing do not concern themselves with the fact that many of these drugs are not new treatments but reverse-engineered old drugs designed to get round product patents.

So what would a socialist society's attitude to animal testing be? In a word, pragmatic. Without being bogged down with imponderable questions of natural animal 'rights', socialist science would (if it decided to do so at all) conduct animal research only under conditions of strict and peer-assessed necessity, and with attendant informed public debate, two key factors notable for their general absence today. Much of the pharmaceutical industry would be obsolete or transformed anyway if one can assume, after capitalism, a dramatic fall in heart disease and obesity, two wealth-related conditions for which the present drug market is principally geared, and an even more dramatic fall in poverty and stress-related diseases which presently do not even merit scientific attention. While 'product' safety would be paramount, and might conceivably require some animal testing, there would be no need to duplicate the testing for twenty different competing brands, as happens now. Nor, in the absence of private ownership of information, would producers deliberately avoid established and tested products because of licence restrictions, or because, in the public domain, they were unpatentable and therefore could never yield a profit.

Socialists are not unduly sentimental about animals, and consider that a human's first loyalty should be their own species. Nevertheless, the degree to which human society is 'civilised' can reasonably be gauged by its treatment of animals and the natural world as well as by its treatment of humans, and socialism, in its abolition of all aspects of the appalling savagery of capitalism, will undoubtedly do its part to abolish all unnecessary suffering by non-human sentient creatures.



More on E-Democracy

In case regular readers suspect Pathfinders of a too uncritical enthusiasm where new communications technology is concerned, here is an example where our enthusiasm is somewhat more muted. With e-democracy projects blossoming everywhere, the interactive approach to government is developing beyond merely doing your tax returns. Now the Scottish Parliament is running an e-petitioning system, where citizens can raise issues and complaints online, the progress of the petition then being fed back to the petitions website for public monitoring (BBC Online Technology, Sept 19).

The idea came from Professor Ann McIntosh, of Napier University, who set the system up with the help of BT and has been running it for a year. "We wanted to show that technology can do a lot more than just support e-voting. It can actually allow participation in decision making," she says, enthusiastically. Socialists would agree, with one simple proviso: that comms technology be first employed in abolishing capitalism. Then we'd see some real public participation in decision making. As it is, electronic petitioning is likely to be treated the same way as paper petitions, except now it can be ignored - electronically.



Self-Determination

Dear Editors,

The last two decades have witnessed an increasing number of anti-capitalist, anti-globalisation movements seeking a voice through protest and opposition to the damaging practices of trans-national corporations and the World Bank, IMF and WTO. The probability is that the vast majority of these individuals have never studied economics or politics and don't understand much of the workings of current economic policies, but they certainly do see and feel the results and negative effects of these policies and they have a feel for what is unjust. They share a common desire for a better world, a fairer world. They may not have identified clearly or explicitly what it is they want in this other, better world, but they have undoubtedly recognised much of what they don't want. Their protests and their slogans are demands to be heard; these are ways of expressing anger, frustration and disagreement with the status quo.

Around the world such groups are voicing many different grievances from many different angles. Bolivians grabbing their water rights back from Bechtel, who are now suing the Bolivian government for compensation for what they would have earned in the future. Hundreds of thousands of Indians being forced off their fertile productive farmland in favour of huge dams which promise fat profits for fat cats. Millions of AIDs sufferers denied access to life-giving treatments for lack of cash. Empathisers in the minority world protesting against the methods and results of worldwide capitalist business.

So many different reasons from so many different perspectives; different stages of anger, deprivation, disenfranchisement. It would be unrealistic to make broad generalisations about the myriad individual goals but it's certainly possible to gather the separate bits and pieces together and view them as discrete perspectives with converging aims. All these fingers may not be poised over exactly the right button but at least they are scrabbling in the right area. Surely, better *something* rather than sitting in a darkened room absorbing more mind-numbing images from another evening's bombardment courtesy of the capitalist media?

It's about choices. People's first choice should be socialism. It seems such a small step from the examples given here, but a huge paradigm shift. For people focused on life's necessities - enough food for the family everyday, somewhere safe to sleep, healthcare and childcare for increasing numbers of chronically ill, a job this month, next year that will pay the bills - it's hard to focus on the light at the end when the tunnel is long and dark. So, as socialists, how do we address this last little push, this yawning gap? Let's not criticise those who haven't figured it out yet. Let's harness their strengths and energies. We need first to get people to see the light, recognize it for what it is and then to keep focused on heading for it through the long dark tunnel of capitalism, in growing numbers, with growing strength in the knowledge that there is a better world, a fairer world, a socialist world.

JANET SURMAN, Turkey.

Marx in Error?

Dear Editors,

I note that you, in the September issue, favourably quote part of Marx's sixth Thesis on Ludwig Feuerbach:

"Feuerbach resolves the essence of religion into the essence of man. But the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations".

I would like to point out that Marx was in error on this point, and that in fact Feuerbach did not abstract from social relations. Here is the man himself:

"The natural viewpoint of man, the viewpoint of the distinction between I and thou, subject and object, is the true and absolute viewpoint; consequently, it is also the viewpoint of philosophy. The single man for himself possesses the essence of man neither in himself as a moral being nor in himself as a thinking being. The essence of man is contained only in the community and unity of man with man; it is a unity, however, which rests only on the reality of the distinction between I and thou. Solitude is finiteness and limitation; community is freedom and infinity. Man for himself is man (in the ordinary sense); man with man - the unity of I and thou - is God" (*Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1844), p 70-71)

A bit fluffy and abstract perhaps, but it is clear, just as it is clear in his *Essence of Christianity*, that his analysis was based upon social relations.

R. CUMMING (by email)

What "Marxist Terrorists"?

Below is a letter sent to Colombian Ambassador to Britain.

Mr Ambassador,

Following on the return to Ireland of the three Irish republicans convicted of assisting the FARC nationalist movement in Colombia, your Vice President, Mr Francisco Santos, is reported in the British and Irish media as saying that the men in question were training 'Marxist terrorists'.

If Mr Santos has some authoritative knowledge of Karl Marx and his political and economic philosophy that knowledge would necessarily have come from the abundant and easily-available writings of Marx or his friend and co-worker, Frederick Engels.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain since its establishment in 1904 has become the repository of genuine Marxist thought in this country and bases its political practice on the basic tenets of Marxism. We affirm that Marx's vision of socialism - or communism, for he used the terms interchangeably - was a wageless, classless, moneyless and stateless, world wherein the machinery of production and the resources of nature would be owned in common by humanity and wherein the state as an apparatus of government over people would give way to a simple administration of things.

As Marx made clear, the very nature of his conception of socialism precluded any form of minority violence; socialism would necessarily have to be established by the conscious, democratic action of the

working class - the producers of all real wealth - and be maintained by the most wide-ranging forms of participative democracy.

If Mr Santos had applied himself to a study of Marx's writings he must surely have noticed that, rather than advocating terrorism, Marx devoted much of his time and energy to repudiating the views of those who urged terrorism on the working class as a means of resolving any facet of its exploitation.

In the present climate of fear engendered by the brutal sectional and conflicting interests of capitalism, Mr Santos' statement is irresponsible in that it exposes genuine Marxists to the threat of violence from many quarters. Indeed, one can only wonder at the possible fate of someone in Columbia thinking he or she had a democratic right to advocate the principles of Marxism.

Since we are not in a position to challenge Mr Santos directly we would ask you as a matter of urgency for clarification of his remarks specifically in relation to the suggestion that Marxism is in any way compatible with the idea of terrorism.

John Bissett, General Secretary.

The following reply was received:

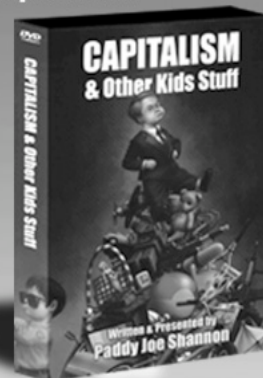
Dear Mr. Bissett,

Thank you for your letter of 10 August regarding certain reported statements by Colombian Vice President Mr. Francisco Santos following the return to Ireland of the three Irish republicans convicted of assisting the FARC in Colombia. Your letter has been forwarded to the Vice President.

ALFONSO LÓPEZ CABELLERO, AMBASSADOR.

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DOUG BROWN, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS, NORTH ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

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Katrina - Not Just an Ill Wind



Driving along the freeways abutting on the Gulf of Mexico it comes as a shock to see so many signs announcing that you are travelling a designated evacuation route. For this is a part of America which is well accustomed to the extremes of stormy weather. But Hurricane Katrina was something utterly out of the ordinary. We are still digesting the accounts of the horrors endured by people who were caught in the path of the hurricane and of their suffering since then. What lives they had have been wrecked; what possessions they relied on have disappeared into the floods with the corpses, the rubbish and the sewage; what they saw as their future has been literally blown away. So far there has been no reliable estimate of the loss of life: does it run into hundreds, thousands or tens of thousands? For those who worry themselves about such issues there has been no informed guess of how much the disaster will cost the insurance companies; Merrill Lynch, who know a thing or two about pushing money around, have come up with the figure of \$22 billion. And George Bush, who could once luxuriate behind apparently unassailable ramparts of support, has had to contemplate the erosion of his popularity.

In its destructive power and the misery it unleashed against the people of the Gulf States, Katrina was extraordinary. But in some important respects it was completely normal and predictable. To begin with there was the stampede of politicians - in particular George Bush - to avoid any responsibility for the catastrophe and for the official failure to rush help to the victims. Apart from the damage to roads, buildings and the like, the hurricane's breach of the levees protecting New Orleans was crucial. Bush told a TV reporter that "I don't think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees" but that was simply untrue. *Business Week* newspaper, for example, thought differently: "Engineers have known for years that New Orleans's levees couldn't withstand anything above a category 3 hurricane" (Katrina was category 5). In fact as recently as 1998 the category 2 hurricane George forced the water levels up to a foot below the top of the levees. In 2002 a local New Orleans newspaper concluded from its investigation that a major hurricane would devastate the region.

Money

Anticipation of the breach should have led to the levees being heightened and strengthened, saving a lot of lives and preventing untold misery for the people. But before Katrina arrived on the scene the funding which could have improved the levees was cut by \$71 million; a previous Secretary of Environmental Quality in Louisiana was angry enough about this to forecast that "a disastrous flood was inevitable". One local emergency management chief thought that the cuts were imposed because "It appears that the money has been moved in the president's budget to handle homeland security and the war in Iraq and I suppose that's the price we pay". He might have put it differently - for capitalism killing

people is more affordable than protecting them from harm.

So what of the people who lived in the path of the storm, of the wind and the flood and whose lives were to be so dramatically affected by decisions on where money was to be spent? In the vast majority they were black and in the lower reaches of poverty. In New Orleans two thirds of the population was African/American, with a quarter of them officially graded as living in poverty. In the Lower Ninth Ward of that city, which suffered particularly badly in the flood, 90 percent were African/American with almost a third of them classified as living in poverty. In a flash of candour which must have caused acute anguish to her minders Barbara Bush, the mother of George Bush and the wife of the former president, shared her thoughts about this: "So many of the people in the area here, you know, were underprivileged anyway. So this [fleeing from the hurricane, from the floods, the fear, the death, then living in the squalor of emergency accommodation] is working well for them"

Poverty

Typically, the people living at or below the poverty line endure bad housing without proper plumbing, hot and cold water, a shower or a bath. It also means that, crucially in America, they could not afford a car or any other ready means of carrying out the official advice to evacuate the area before Katrina arrived - and that if they did manage to flee they would have no access to ready places of refuge. It seems obvious that such people should help themselves from damaged shops and stores, putting survival before capitalism's property laws. They would not have been deterred to be told that this was looting, a very serious crime; nor would they have been impressed by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's apparent condoning of the same type of activity, when it suited him, in the case of Iraq: "Freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things". Perhaps Katrina had informed the looters that to be poor can be to suffer a desperately inadequate life style with miserable prospects and that the poorer you are the worse this is.

Katrina was a disaster of epic scale for the poor of the Gulf States, fleeing the winds and the waters, or cowering in some noxious shelter. There was some bad news also for the other side of the class divide. The firm Deloitte, who are called "consultants" (which does not mean they are readily available to give advice to anyone trying to get by on Social Security of any kind) calculated that the hurricane could have damaged parts of the American economy on a scale comparable to the events of 9/11. One of the firm's spokespersons warned about the effect on the insurance industry, on tourism, leisure, hospitality and the stock market. In fact the stock markets in London and America hardly fluttered. In any case any tremors were overridden by the good news for the kind of people who may consult Deloitte. Arguing that the damage to oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico would cause a shortage,

the oil firms were quick to raise their prices. On the assumption that because almost a third of America's coffee crop would have been stored in New Orleans the price of coffee on the market soared by 11 percent.

Profits

The construction industry - notably part of the Haliburton Group, which was once bossed by Vice President Dick Cheney and which prospers so well out of repairing the damage the American forces have done in Iraq - was eagerly preparing bids to reconstruct the damaged cities of the Gulf. Shares in Haliburton did not fall but went up by two percent. In England shares in Aggreko, who supply portable power generators, soared by 7.5 percent and shares in Wolesley, which supplies plumbing and heating, were up by three percent. One financial adviser, after the obligatory acknowledgement that a lot of people had suffered terribly in the hurricane, had something of a song in his heart :

"The impact of events such as Katrina, while devastating for the people involved, tend to be quite short-term and you should be investing in America, or any other region for that matter, for the long-term - at least five years and probably 10 or more. Over that period, can you afford to be out of the world's largest economy and stock market, which has some of the best companies in the World?"

And how is the reconstruction likely to turn out? If the experience of the aftermath of the Boxing Day tsunami is any guide, the face of places like New Orleans will be changed for ever as luxury tourism is foisted on the place, leaving one or two small areas where a kind of sanitised memory is allowed to survive. The chairman of the New Orleans Business Council ominously spoke of how "to use this catastrophe as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change the dynamic" of the city. Well, the people of New Orleans and of the rest of the world have been warned.

Socialism

Katrina was a disaster of epic proportions which no style of human organisation, even one based on communal ownership and control of the means of life, could have averted or controlled. But such a society would have prevented a calamity on the scale of New Orleans. A classless society, organised on the basis of human interests, would not have misjudged the power of Katrina, nor compromised the safety of its people in its path by undermining the strength of defences because it was financially advisable to do so. It would not have bungled any necessary rescue and support services. And as an open and democratic society it would not have been plagued by politicians disguising their true failures and impotence behind a screen of lies. ■

RC

Aspects of the disaster, published by Indymedia, United States.

● The city has a 40% illiteracy rate.

● New Orleans Police Department officers, who have been accused of drug running, corruption and theft, were 'caught' on videotape looting a Wal-Mart. The Arizona Republic reported that its local sheriffs "watched New Orleans police officers loading their patrol cars with items taken from various businesses, a couple of pharmacies, a hardware store, an auto-parts store and a grocery store."

● The Bush administration, in every year since 2001, has cut or refused to fund New Orleans flood control, and ignored scientists warnings of increased hurricanes as a result of global warming.

● There are many first-hand reports of relief organizations being refused entry into the city. The Red Cross' official website explains "The state Homeland Security Department had requested--and continues to request--that the American Red Cross not come back into New Orleans following the hurricane. Our presence would keep people from evacuating and encourage others to come into the city."

● New Orleans is the only deepwater port in the US served by six class-one railroads. None of these were used to take people out of the city.

● Tons of food ready for delivery by air to refugees was halted because of President Bush's visit to the city. "We had arrangements to airlift food by helicopter to these folks, and now the food is sitting in trucks because they won't let helicopters fly," said Casey O'Shea, U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon's chief of staff. It was not reported whether the supplies ever actually made it to those who most needed it.

● Private military companies have been employed to guard the property of the city's millionaires from looters.

● "As we approached the bridge, armed Gretna sheriffs formed a line across the foot of the bridge. Before we were close enough to speak, they began firing their weapons over our heads. We questioned why we couldn't cross the bridge. They responded that the West Bank was not going to become New Orleans and there would be no Superdomes in their City. These were code words for if you are poor and black, you are not crossing the Mississippi River and you were not getting out of New Orleans."

<http://neworleans.indymedia.org>

Katrina: the poor suffer more

The recently sickening ravages of property and life wrought by Hurricane Katrina have been extensively covered by the media, but with some rather glaring omissions.

The first was that a society based on the rights of property over life had a great deal to do with exacerbating an already



Bush leads the rescue effort

traumatic situation. What we witnessed the most on television were pathetic yet stark scenes of poor people huddled in a sports stadium, homes lost forever, awaiting supplies and aid that took endless days to arrive. During this time more people died, the ill were uncared for, and conditions of existence plummeted to unsanitary levels often associated with the shanty towns of South America or Turkish prisons, but not with the United States of America. While these already traumatised people had to endure an additional trauma of abandonment and lack of the basic wherewithal to survive, millions of homes and offices unused and awaiting buyers sat empty around the country. But they were not available to the million homeless of New Orleans, whose life savings had been lost in homes rendered rubble, or who simply never had the savings to invest in their own home.

Nobody on television asked the most salient question of all: "should people struck by terrible tragedy be victims of charity at all, or should they instead be automatically entitled to society's wealth simply by demonstrating clear-cut needs for homes, hygiene, food, clothes, and comfort?" Society as presently constituted is not geared toward the satisfaction of our needs, but rather to the sale of commodities to yield profits, and such a society proved itself demonstrably incapable of meeting needs of the dire and desperate kinds that followed on the heels of Katrina. But hey, there are already millions of homeless and poor people in the United States who are not entitled to those vast numbers of empty homes awaiting purchase, so why should these victims of extreme weather be any more fortunate?

Had you or I decided to by-pass the sleeping government and simply pick up a couple of homeless individuals and drop them off in another town, we would have had to do so only by taking time off work. Most of us, as workers, have commitments to our employers that may not be so casually by-passed. And in capitalism, even relief efforts are subject to the welfare agencies' budgetary constraints. Ever heard of the tens of

millions of starving and ill children who die each and every year around the world for whom there is simply not enough money to go around? While relief for those left in New Orleans was certainly offered by the Red Cross and eventually by the state, few asked whether it is sane or even effective to meet critical human needs depending upon how much money or how many volunteers may be assembled. What if those of you donating a few dollars at supermarkets for Katrina victims simply don't raise enough? Does that mean that the plight of those struck by disaster is entirely the result of your personal failures, or of a society in which wealth is produced only to be sold, and not to meet our needs? We socialists think the latter.

Nobody on television asked whether by rights the wealth of society should not be automatically due to all individuals. Thus, the million New Orleanians with homes tragically destroyed suddenly enter into that category of "homeless," those without the monetary means to buy or rent. Nobody on the idiot box asked the most obvious question: "why shouldn't homes be available to anybody who needs them?"

"society proved itself demonstrably incapable of meeting needs that followed on the heels of Katrina"

A further question never raised in recent television coverage was about the severity of the storm itself. Many scientists around the world are now convinced that the ecological devastation wrought by modern society has played its part in altering global weather patterns, even while conservative politicians and owners of polluting industry deny such hypotheses and try hard to keep them from being discussed in the media. Tropical forests are vanishing at the rate of city sizes per day, ice is melting at the polar caps, storms are increasing and worsening, temperatures are rising, ozone levels are diminishing. Quite a few scientists have made calculations that if

present levels of ecological destruction continue unabated for the next ten, twenty or thirty years, then catastrophic alterations in weather will no longer be avoidable, even if pollution were stopped after such a date. While it is difficult to be certain if the damage to the planet caused by capitalist production has been responsible for recent changes for the worse in weather, one thing is clear - such dire warnings from the scientific community are not going to be taken seriously. This leaves us rightly concerned whether we are heading into an era in which such similarly devastating phenomena as Hurricane Katrina will not be exceptions, but the rule. What are you all going to do about it? When will citizens take control, and stop leaving critical decision making to leaders of all parties led by the supremacy of corporate interests. What are you personally going to do to render this planet a joy to share, to create a society for you and your children that meets our needs?

The World Socialist Party of the United States is a companion party of the World Socialist Movement. It aims to bring about a nonviolent revolution in the ownership of the means of production from private or state to common. In such a society, money will no longer be necessary, as the things and services we require to live fully (food, clothes, medical services, homes, transportation, and other modern human needs) will be freely available to all. This is because the means of production will be owned in common by the entire community, and will be democratically controlled by that community as well, a society in which leaders are replaced by truly democratic decision making of all citizens.

In a society of common ownership, all war in such a nationless world will be immediately abolished, while the end of starvation and dire poverty will quickly follow suit. Without the barriers of economic cost holding back human progress, more ecologically sustainable ways to provide energy and production for ourselves will be immediately planned and created on a global basis. We will become for the first time in history a truly human family looking after itself. ■

Dr. Who (World Socialist Party of US)

Colour coding - blacks 'loot' while whites 'find', apparently, in the New Orleans disaster

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

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Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

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Why they dropped the bombs

Richard Headicar concludes his analysis of the reasons why the US dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

Understandably Allied servicemen involved in the Pacific war, many of whom experienced the unspeakable horrors of Japanese prisoner of war camps, welcomed the atomic bombs as a "miracle of deliverance". With a few notable exceptions, even those historians who conclude that dropping the bombs was not necessary to obtain Allied victory - that it would not even have been necessary to invade Japan - generally accept that using the bombs probably shortened the war. Even if only by a few weeks. In the grim reality of war, the life of a single comrade saved is worth a thousand enemy slain.

But what would such men think if they knew that, far from shortening the war, the atomic bombs actually prolonged it? That for all the crocodile tears shed about the "terrible plight" of the captives; for all hollow praise heaped upon the "heroic sacrifices" of the armed forces they were, after all, merely expendable pawns in the unrelenting hostilities of power politics? That "bringing our boys back as soon as possible", was not actually the first order of business?

Did the US want Russian intervention?

By the time the atom bombs were dropped, Allied victory through overwhelming military superiority was virtually assured. Also, at Potsdam in July 1945, Stalin had confirmed his intention to enter the war on 15 August. As President Truman, writing in his private journal, noted at the time: "Fini Japs when that comes about". In fact Russia declared war on Japan on 8 August and the following day - just hours later in Far East time - Russian troops attacked in Manchuria and Korea. The rapidity with which they penetrated against the cream of the Japanese army is convincing evidence for many commentators that Japanese surrender would have swiftly followed. Surely such a potentially decisive intervention would have been welcomed by those pledged to "bringing our boys back as soon as possible"? Surely every effort would have been made to encourage the speediest possible participation of the Russian military as a matter of utmost urgency? Not so!

The attitude of the US policy makers regarding Russian intervention, even though initially positive, was never entirely free from fear-fuelled ambivalence. And, corresponding with increasingly encouraging reports from the Manhattan project, that attitude eventually hardened to become actively negative. Well-founded mutual suspicion governed every move; trickery and deception concerning their respective intentions was extensively employed by both sides. And, once again, American Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, unashamedly declared his hand. He thought that it would be "regrettable" if Russia became

involved in the war. He was desperately worried that if Stalin knew about the awesome power of the atomic bomb (he did) he might "immediately enter the war". So Byrnes sought to delay Russian entry. That his attempts were unsuccessful is largely irrelevant and hardly the point, which is that the US leaders did not want Russian intervention. Firstly, because they were intent on using their atomic bombs before the war in the Pacific ended and, secondly, they were reluctant to share their prospective economic and political influence in the Far East with anyone else, friend or foe.

Although Stalin had no qualms about rescinding the Neutrality Pact with Japan, the likelihood of Russia entering the Pacific War any earlier than it did, even had it been urged to do so by America, was extremely remote. Yet there were two other avenues through which the US administration, had it had the slightest inclination to pursue them, could almost certainly have succeeded in shortening the conflict. Instead, to serve their own agenda, they approached these avenues with sufficient circumspection to frustrate every overture; each manoeuvre calculated to obstruct the least chance of any kind of rapprochement.

Was Japan really suing for peace?

The evidence that it was is overwhelming. Astonishingly, Japanese diplomats initiated peace feelers as early as late summer 1944. They continued to do so - through Sweden, Switzerland, Russia and even the Vatican. Particular efforts were made via Moscow in the (mistaken) belief that the Neutrality Pact that existed between Japan and Russia made it the most viable channel. Despite the fact that Stalin had previously declined to renew the pact, Japanese fears were somewhat mollified (but by no means



Suspicion, trickery and deception - the Potsdam conference, July 1945

quelled) by his assurance that it would continue to inform his decisions until its expiry in April 1946. But by the end of 1943 he had already made known to Allied leaders his intention to enter the war against Japan and signed an agreement confirming it, at Yalta in February 1945.

On the day following the collapse of Okinawa (21 June 1945), Emperor Hirohito told the Supreme Council for the Direction of War to reverse their "Basic Policy", urging them to seek peace by diplomatic means: "You will consider the question of ending the war as soon as possible". It was the specific mission of the new cabinet of Prime Minister, Baron Kantaro Suzuki (appointed 7 April 1945), to seek peace. But neither the US nor Russia were interested in Japan's efforts for peace; the

US wanted to wait until it could drop the atom bombs and Russia until it was ready to declare war. Not one of the messages imparted to Moscow by the Japanese ambassador was passed on to America. This made little difference, however, since all Japanese codes - diplomatic ("Magic") and operational ("ultra") had long been broken. An extract from "Magic" N° 1205 (13 July 1945) deciphering a cable from Foreign Minister Togo to Ambassador Sato reads: "His Majesty the Emperor, mindful of the fact that the present war daily brings greater evil and sacrifice upon the peoples of all belligerent powers, desires from his heart that it may be quickly terminated". The same transcript further states: "It is the Emperor's private intention to send Prince Konoye to Moscow as a Special Envoy . . ." And so he did, but Moscow would not receive him. Later President Truman "thanked" Marshal Stalin.

Stephen Harper, in his book *Miracle of Deliverance*, subtitled 'The Case for the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki', writes, with commendable honesty: "Ways could have been found to explore the Japanese peace moves had there been any desire to do so, but it seems clear that the doctrine of unconditional surrender . . . had become compulsive thinking - an Allied blindspot".

Was it unconditional surrender?

On 21 July an ultimatum - the Potsdam Declaration - was given to the Japanese government. It was issued on behalf of the President of the United States, the President of Nationalist China and the Prime Minister of Great Britain; but not Russia. Its language was uncompromising as these extracts show:

"Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

"There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest . . . We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces . . ."

Despite the inclusion of phrases such as : "We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved . . .", "Freedom of speech, of religion and of thought . . .", ". . . fundamental human rights shall be established" - the single non-negotiable concession, repeatedly demanded by Japan, was noticeably absent: a guarantee of the Emperor's position. A crucial paragraph offering just such a guarantee was deleted by the US Secretary of State James F. Byrnes. Consequently, the Declaration was deemed unacceptable by Japan - just as the US hoped it would be.

Much discussion has ensued concerning the nature of the Japanese response. Some analysts consider it to be an outright rejection; others no more than a pause for breath. Confusion was sown by the use of the Japanese term "mokusatsu", which can mean: "take no notice of"; "treat with silent



Hirohito, June 1945 - "You will consider the question of ending the war as soon as possible".

contempt" or (most probably) "withhold comment". Some writers have emphasised the jingoistic and defiant statements trumpeted in the Japanese media, but these were obviously face-saving propaganda exercises designed to boost national morale. Other compelling evidence makes it abundantly clear that, so far as Japan was concerned, negotiations were still very much ongoing. And that the US was aware of it.

"Magic" intercept N° 1218 (26 July 1945) revealed the text of another message sent from Foreign Minister Togo to Ambassador Sato. This was a reaction to a broadcast made to the Japanese on 21 July, on behalf of the US. The broadcast was made by Captain (later Rear Admiral) Ellis M. Zacharias, later to write an article for Look magazine (6 June 1950) entitled "How We Bungled the Japanese Surrender". Part of the "Magic" summary stated: "It is impossible for us to accept unconditional surrender, no matter in what guise, but . . . there is no objection to the restoration of peace on the basis of the Atlantic Charter". But once again Byrnes intervened and claimed that it was best to refrain from designating the broadcast as "official".

That the issue of "unconditional surrender" was the primary stumbling block to the achievement of a peace settlement had been recognised long before. A Joint Intelligence Committee in March 1940 commented: "The crux of the political situation will lie in the all-important status of the Japanese Emperor". After the war was over, both Secretary of War Stimson and the President recorded their conclusions. "[H]istory might find that the United States, by its delay in stating its position [on the surrender terms] had prolonged the war" wrote Stimson in his memoirs. Or as Truman succinctly remarked during the compiling of his: "It was because of the unconditional surrender policy against Japan that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were wiped out".

Two days after the Potsdam Declaration, Prince Konoye was still making frantic efforts to make contact with Russian diplomats, contradicting the generally accepted notion that the Declaration had been dismissed out of hand by Japan. In any event, the decision to drop the bomb had already been taken: finally confirmed on the same day as the Declaration.

On 10 August, the morning after the second bomb was dropped, an offer of surrender from Japan was received in Washington. Once more it stipulated that any agreement should " . . . not compromise any demand which prejudiced the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler". Stimson favoured its acceptance; Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal suggested a compromise; Byrnes opposed it. For once, Byrnes had to give way but, nevertheless, he was the one who drafted the reply, the key phrase of which permitted that vital Japanese proviso: "From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers". It was enough. The bombs, apparently, had not persuaded Japan to drop its proviso concerning the Emperor.

Byrnes's reluctance to bend, even at this juncture, is hard to fathom precisely. What is seldom mentioned in popular accounts of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, is that a third bomb would have been delivered and ready to drop by 17 August 1945.

Why were the bombs dropped?

A complex labyrinth of reasons lay behind the decision to drop the atomic bombs. Once the vastly expensive machinery of production had commenced, and the original purpose of its instigation forgotten, sufficient resolve not to use it ceased to exist. The astronomical investment of public funds needed to be justified; the widespread public antipathy of the American population towards the Japanese following the Pearl Harbour attack, demanded revenge - a mood of which the American leadership was acutely aware. As Secretary for War Stimson subsequently observed: "No man, in our position and subject to our responsibilities, holding in his hands a weapon of such possibilities could have failed to use it and afterwards look his countrymen in the face".

A number of 'revisionist' historians confidently assert that the primary motive was to gain diplomatic advantage: a powerful political lever allowing the US to dominate future negotiations with the Soviet Union. They make a powerful case and undoubtedly this was a major consideration in the formulation of atomic policy. But this could have been accomplished with just a single

bomb and, surely, not necessarily on a heavily-populated city.

The fact that two bombs were dropped, however - without warning - on specifically targeted and crowded locations which had



Russian columns enter Changchun, capital of Manchuria, 1945

been spared aerial bombardment; the fact that each bomb had different technology (one uranium-explosion; one plutonium-implosion), each with different yields, dropped at different heights but both resulting in prolonged and deadly after-effects of which little was understood, suggests the conclusion that the primary motives might have been the seldom mentioned (almost unmentionable) one of "scientific" experimentation. A conclusion that seems to be confirmed by the grim recommendations of both the Interim and Target committees detailed in the first part of this article (last month).

The terrible war in the Pacific, in common with all wars between capitalist states, had its origins in the protection and expansion of economic interests. There seems to be no limit to the degradation and cruelty utilised to protect those interests. Anyone visiting the Hiroshima museum would be able to view the leaflets that were dropped warning of an atomic attack. In an act of macabre cynicism that almost defies belief, those leaflets were not dropped until 9 August - three days after the bombing. Things improved for Nagasaki - they were only one day late. ■

RICHARD HEADICAR

A list of the sources of the quotes in this article or further information on particular points can be obtained on request to: Socialist Standard, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN.

Cooking the Books (1)

The market fails again

Within a month of the Live8 concerts that

were supposed to influence the leaders of world capitalism to do something about poverty in Africa, the charities had to get their begging bowls out again. This time for a famine in Niger, an ex-French colony to the north of Nigeria with a population of over 11.6 million.

In October last year various international agencies including the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation signalled that, due to a bad harvest and an invasion of locusts, cereal production in Niger in 2004-5 was likely to be 7.5 percent below normal. In accordance with the law of supply and demand the price of millet, the main cereal grown

and consumed in Niger, began to rise, with the result that the farmers whose crop had failed were unable to afford to buy enough food for their families. Malnutrition, especially amongst children, grew.

The government reacted by bringing in a scheme to sell millet at a reduced price, but although this was below the market price it was still two times higher than the price the farmers had received for their 2003-4 crop.

Dr Isabelle Defourny, of Médecins Sans Frontières, takes up the story:

"In early June, Niger's prime minister acknowledged that the government's response was ineffective when he noted that hundreds of thousands of the 3.5 million people threatened by the food shortage were too poor to be able to purchase cereal, even at a low price. Those most severely affected by the food crisis have the least resources, including farmers whose harvests were poor and cattle producers and

craftsmen. Many had already exhausted their resources, selling goods and animals to feed themselves." (Messages, MSF newsletter, July-August, www.msf.fr/documents/base/2005-07-01-Messages137VA.pdf)

MSF urged that "free food distribution is the only way to keep the situation from worsening and to prevent large numbers of deaths", a perfectly reasonable proposal if we were living in a society geared to serving human needs and welfare. But we're not. The authorities took a different view, for reasons explained by social researcher, Jean-Hervé Jezequel, in an interview in the same issue of Messages:

" . . . in early June, at a meeting of the Joint Commission for Consultation, the decision-making body of the 'action plan' which includes representatives of the state and of institutional donors, the government of Niger declared that despite the seriousness of the food crisis, it would not set up free distribution operations.

The only political reaction from the institutional donors came from the ambassador of France, who was glad there was a 'policy that will not destabilize the markets'. The ambience was almost surreal: ignoring the emergency food situation, economic considerations were, without hesitation, given priority over the fate of endangered people."

The French newspaper *Libération* reported that some cereal merchants had held back stocks to drive up prices further and that others had "disposed of their stocks in neighbouring Nigeria where the population has a higher purchasing power" (9 August).

So, yet again, as in every "food crisis" since the Great Starvation in Ireland in the 1840s, the workings of capitalism have produced the obscene spectacle of the export of food from an area where people are starving because, not having money, they don't constitute a market and so don't count.

When a 'land for sale by auction' notice appeared at the end of a cul-de-sac in Billericay, Essex, the reaction was swift and well organised. A letter expressing concern that the land might be bought and occupied by members of the travelling community with a detrimental effect on the value of their properties was immediately prepared by two residents and delivered to 180 houses in the vicinity. Within days a meeting was held and a limited company set up with some 45 neighbours contributing to the eventual purchase price of £75,000. The land purchased is part of a 'field', thickly overgrown mainly with hawthorns, most of which is owned by a property company in the anticipation that its green-belt status will some time be changed.

Whether or not the fears of residents in this instance were well founded, the near impossibility of finding legal stopping places means that Gypsies and Travellers have been forced into confrontational situations with local authorities and with members of the settled community in the areas where they are encamped.

It is estimated that in England there are between 4,000 and 5,000 vans and from 16,000 to 20,000 Travellers and Gypsies either in transit or without a legal place to stay (*Environmental Health Journal*, April 2005, online). The shortage of sites means that Travellers are forced to move on, to the detriment of their health and their children's education. It also means that many more than were intended are stopping on legal sites. This for example is the situation at Crays Hill in Basildon, also in Essex, where there are some 30 legal plots on a site but more than sixty are occupied illegally. Similar situations can be found in various parts of the country.

The plight of Gypsies and Travellers is not a popular cause. In 1973 Jeremy Sandford wrote in his book *Gypsies* of the situation for Gypsies who had always been vulnerable to attack from those who "perhaps from envy of their free and easy ways" want to drive them from "our hedgerows, commons and public places" but were now faced with legislation which effectively outlawed their way of life. He also stated in his conclusion that at the present rate of progress "it may well be into the 2000s' before there was a place on a site for every British gypsy". However far from there being progress the situation has become much worse.

The 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act had "forced families to move off agricultural land onto lay-bys and car parks." A government survey revealed

Are Gypsies the problem?

the extent of traveller poverty: more than two thirds were living on sites without access to running water or rubbish disposal (Helen O'Nions, *The Marginalisation of Gypsies*, 1995). The 1968 Caravan Sites Act had the prime purpose of remedying this situation. Local Authorities were mandated to provide "adequate

family groups. Councils had additional powers to remove Gypsies not on designated sites. The Act did not work as intended, not least because councils found ways around the duty to provide sites. By the time the Conservative government removed the statutory obligations in 1994 one third of Travellers had no legal place to stay. During the Thatcher era thousands of traditional stopping places disappeared.

In what is seen as an attempt to make Gypsies abandon the nomadic way of life the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 ended the duty for local authorities to provide sites and removed government funding for them. It also became a criminal offence for caravans to stop on the

highway, unoccupied land, common land or land without consent. Gypsies were encouraged to buy land and develop their own sites, but because of the restrictive criteria set by councils some 80 per cent of these applications are turned down. This is why some have resorted to buying and

moving on to land before seeking planning permission. The position whereby green-belt land could be considered for Gypsy sites ("a recognition of the difficulty of finding suitable sites in suburbia") was ended on the grounds that "Gypsies enjoy a privileged position in the planning system". Ironically councils were given encouragement to allow building and development on green-belt sites.

The Labour government has resumed the funding of sites and has increased the amount it intends to spend on them. However it has not put the responsibilities of councils back to the pre-1994 position. The Housing Act 2004 placed a duty on local authorities to include Gypsies and Travellers in their local housing assessments and "demonstrate how these needs will be met", with the Secretary of State having powers to direct a local authority to produce a plan. Brentwood is the first council to be challenged in this way. If the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is successful in getting Brentwood to comply it will encourage other councils "to get on with the job". Many councils do not need encouragement; the *Environmental Health Journal* cites the example of Norfolk, whose Traveller Liaison Group has already produced a Traveller protocol and has five authorised sites and is planning a transit site.

Basildon council has 106 authorised sites but still does not have enough places for all of the Travellers who wish to stop in the district. Wakefield claims to have one of the largest authorised Traveller sites in the country and is the first council to announce plans to apply Anti-Social Behaviour



Scenes from a caravan and gypsy effigy burning, Fittle, Sussex, Oct 2003. The police dropped all charges against the 12 villagers responsible.

accommodation for Gypsies residing in or resorting to their area". However, the sites that were provided by councils were not necessarily to the liking of Gypsies in that they made insufficient allowance for their lifestyle. For example the collecting of scrap metal and keeping of animals could be forbidden, and there would not be room for the gathering together of extended

Orders to particular illegal encampments. These require a lower standard of proof than normal court proceedings but the Gypsy Council is advising Gypsies to challenge the orders through the courts.

In some instances local people protesting about illegal traveller sites are also sympathetic to the plight of Gypsies and Travellers; for example, the Cottenham Residents' Association and the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition forwarded a joint statement to the Government pointing out that the provision of adequate sites by all local authorities would address the acute shortage of sites and also bring an end to illegal and unauthorised encampments.

Whilst emphasis is put on the problems caused by illegal sites and the excess numbers who are stopping on authorised sites, the widespread perception is of Gypsies and Travellers as people who live outside of the constraints which the settled community are bound by, who do not contribute in work or taxes but commit crime, spoil the environment with their rubbish and generally cause trouble by their very presence in an area.

Gypsies and Travellers are much like other people; most of them do work, though not necessarily in full-time wage labour, and they do pay taxes. A study for the Rowntree



imposed on scrap metal dealing.

I live in that cul-de-sac in Billericay but as a Socialist did not take part in the anti-Traveller action of the others. That would be to target a group of fellow

more difficult over recent years including legal restrictions, the disappearance of traditional stopping sites (some after hundreds of years in use), constantly being moved on. Other factors are the reduction in casual farm work, and restrictions

workers for problems caused by capitalism. Could the reasonable enough demands of the Travellers be met within capitalism? Possibly. It may be that local authorities will be persuaded to fulfil their obligations but, since they are faced with competing demands on their finances, probably at the expense of other local services. But what will never be able to be ended under capitalism is the competition between workers for jobs, housing and amenities arising out of the artificial scarcity that is built-in to it and which gives rise to and sustains divisive prejudices amongst those who are not socialists. It was precisely because there are so many problems which cannot be solved within the capitalist system that I became a Socialist. ■

PAT DEUTZ



Cooking the Books (2)

Feudal relic

In July the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee issued a report on the finances of the Duchy of Cornwall which, since feudal times, has provided a private income for the heir to the throne. A reminder that the "royal family" not only supply heads of state for UK Capitalism Inc but are also aristocrats in their own right, with their own landed estates.

The thrust of the committee's report - dominated as the committee is by New Labour MPs who favour a "modernised" capitalism - was that Prince Charles was not running the Duchy as a proper capitalist enterprise. But the Duchy is a landed estate rather than a capitalist corporation. The aim is still of course to end up with a surplus, but Charles' income comes mainly from the rents paid to his estate by tenant farmers and, increasingly it seems, commercial firms for the use of the land he has inherited from previous heirs to the throne.

According to the report, the Duchy's assets at the end of 2004 were valued at £428 million, most of it land.

England was the classic country of a landowning class of this type, and Marx's mid-19th century analysis of the operation of capitalism which then still had a large agricultural sector, like that of Adam Smith and David Ricardo before him, was based on a three class system: a landowning class renting out its land to capitalist tenant farmers who employ wage workers. These latter produce surplus value which is then shared between the capitalist employer as profit and the landowner as rent.

Ground-rent is a pure monopoly income which accrues to people who, for accidental historical reasons, happen to be owners of a portion of the globe; which allows them to say, even to capitalists, "you can't use my land for your farm or your factory or whatever unless you hand over to me a share of the proceeds". So landowners are parasites on parasites. In the 19th century this was a big issue with capitalist politicians continually raising the "land question", but it eventually ended in compromise and intermarriage between members of the two classes. We can now talk of an essentially two class system - capitalists and workers - even though ground-rent remains money

for nothing.

Actually, Charles is also a bit of a capitalist in his own right. He markets organic food under the label "Duchy Originals" but which, according to the *Times* (22 July), "made a profit of £1 million on a turnover of £40 million, which most commercial enterprises would regard as an inefficient return". But then, if you've got an income from your private estate of £11.9 million in the tax year 2003-4 (Committee Report) you don't have to be so ruthless in your pursuit of any commercial profit as you would be if this was your only source of income. But the New Labour MPs are right. If all capitalist firms took the same aristocratic attitude to profit-making as Charles, then British capitalism would be in trouble on world markets. The typical capitalist firm has to try to maximise its profits, not just to please its shareholders, but to keep in a fit state to continue to compete by having funds to invest in means to reduce its costs.

In the 1860s when Marx was writing *Capital* the typical capitalist was still an individual owner who ran his own business or a partnership of such owners, though this was beginning to change with the coming of the limited liability company. Marx described the individual capitalist as "capital personified and endowed with consciousness and a will" (Volume I, chapter 4). Thus, the individual capitalist's greed was not a personal failing but a reflection of the fact that he personified capital's need to expand continuously.

Limited companies (which Marx did discuss in Volume III of *Capital*) are now the dominant form and maximising profits is no longer a mere personal motivation; it is a legal obligation on those who run companies. The same applies to pension funds and other so-called "institutional investors"; the managers and trustees of such funds are under a legal obligation to maximise the fund's income or face a breach of trust charge. Which makes them as ruthless profit-seekers as any capitalist corporation or 19th century Gradgrind.

Prince Charles is just not in this league, but then he's more of a personification of landed property.



Foundation among New Age travellers found that nearly half of those surveyed were in work and many more had worked at some time during the year. Most of the accusations regarding criminal behaviour are unsubstantiated but as in the rest of society some commit crimes. Ironically many thousands of Gypsies (non-Gypsies) choose to take caravan and camping holidays, and cook meals in their gardens; some dump their old sofas and other rubbish in country lanes.

Gypsies have maintained their identity through many centuries of prejudice and discrimination. They may choose to call themselves Travellers but not all Travellers are Gypsies and not all Gypsies are of a single group. Changes in their lifestyle have inevitably been made. The most obvious being the disappearance of horse-drawn caravans which had earlier replaced bender tents. We have shown some of the things which have made the itinerant life



Left: workers during the recent Gate Gourmet strike. Above: catering staff in happier times

Gate Gourmet - Another Union Sell-Out?

For those given to circular reasoning, the announcement on 12 September this year of a deal for a redundancy package for sacked Gate Gourmet airline catering workers will be seen as yet another example of trade union officials selling out or even deliberately sabotaging the struggles of the working class. The case seems harsh and clear. On 10 August Gate Gourmet, which provides airborne catering to British Airways passengers, sacked 667 workers - infamously, now - by megaphone. The employees had stopped work and had gathered in the canteen to discuss developments in ongoing redundancy negotiations - chiefly the management's decision to take on 130 new temporary workers. This was clearly a provocative move to try and undermine the existing staff's position. The staff were told to return immediately to work, and they refused.

There is clear evidence of deliberate provocation - security guards were on hand to control the situation; extra staff were bussed in immediately to replace the sacked workers; the following working day, all staff received dismissal letters, even those who had been off sick the previous day. The firm even went as far as to inform other companies they work with of the dispute in advance.

Clearly, management had chosen the best time to orchestrate this attack: the height of the holiday season, with the guarantee of headlines about holiday chaos and passenger misery from the uniformly loyal lickspittles in the capitalist press. This strategy was given a fillip when British Airways baggage handlers heard about this ruthless behaviour, and walked out to help defend people they work with daily, who are moreover in many cases their friends and neighbours. A wildcat solidarity strike. This spread the disruption and guaranteed more passenger misery, chaos and gangrene - or whatever other unpleasantness tabloids are attributing to strikes today.

The strike lasted for two days, grounding hundreds of flights. Eventually, the baggage handlers returned to work, and union officials from the Transport and General Workers Union began negotiations over the status of the sacked workers. Although for legal reasons the union had been unable to support the either the wildcat or the solidarity strike they did established a picket of the company's headquarters to continue their campaign.

Even this was too much for Gate Gourmet, and having successfully called out their allies in the press to their cause, they

then sent in their reserves from the state. The High Court was asked to rule the picket unlawful - to protect those staff who wanted to continue working (as their devoted employers had it) from being intimidated by the people who had been sacked by megaphone and escorted from the grounds by gentle flower scented security guards. A shining display of concern for their staff.

Although the court ruled that the picket was 'lawful peaceful assembly' picketers were forbidden from blocking the route into work, taking photos of staff or even trying to talk to them, at all. Further, the T&G union was made responsible for the conduct of the picket - a move that directly threatened the assets of the union should any infractions of the courts injunction occur.

The role of the law has been significant in this case. Much of the press made hay from the 'illegal secondary industrial action'. This is not strictly correct, secondary action - where workers for one employer strike in support of workers for

“the workers have proven, yet again, that anti-union laws do not stop them taking action”

another - is merely unlawful, not illegal (i.e. it is not protected by law, as striking is, but is not itself prevented by law). This merely means that unions who engage in the practice are liable for civil proceedings from employers for claims of restraint of trade. It was protection from such litigation - in the aftermath of the precedent of the famous Taff Vale case of 1901 - that spurred the growth of the Labour Party and the unions' interest in it.

Calling the action illegal, though, has a significant symbolic and ideological role in giving the impression - to a generally law-abiding populace - that striking is criminal and by extension wicked. A great many comment pages on the internet were filled with people complaining about secondary action (note, not solidarity action) and bemoaning the return to the 1970s.

This dispute is being used by union leaders to renew calls for changes to industrial relations law in the UK, citing it as a hard case that justifies modification of

those laws. At last month's TUC conference the call went up that at least workers in firms with contracted out services - like BA's catering - should be allowed to engage in solidarity action. This is incredibly unlikely, since the government is desperate not to look even remotely like it supports trade unions and seems, in fact, to be proud of the restrictive industrial relations law in the UK.

It is also unlikely, because such a course would utterly undermine the whole point of contracting out - especially in its Public Finance Initiative (PFI) form of contracting out state services. Outsourcing and contracting-out previously in-house services is meant to change the legal standing of union members so that they are officially working for different companies even if they work together to provide a service. It is classic divide and rule.

The downside of this tack, though, appears to have surfaced in the Gate Gourmet dispute. It turns out that the catering firm (or at least the Gate Gourmet part of a bigger holding company) is losing something like £25 million a year. These strikes have come when Gate Gourmet has been in the middle of trying to renegotiate their contract with BA. The seemingly provoked strike, then, works advantageously for them, because it means they can use the disruption from their cost cutting exercise to damage BA's service and business. In effect, it seems they have taken industrial action to renegotiate their contractual terms.

Contracting out means handing over control of labour management to outside companies, and opens up a firm - seemingly - to damaging industrial disputes not of their making but in which they are snared.

All that aside, the workers have proven, yet again, that anti-union laws do not stop them taking action. It is, and always has been, the determination and consciousness of workers that guides their disputes. No law could stop people refusing to work. As in most of the recent unofficial action - other baggage handlers, Royal Mail strikes, etc. - management will not try and pursue the matter afterwards anyway - the damaging repercussions to their own business usually outweigh the benefits of hounding strikers or bringing legal action. That is why Gate Gourmet pre-empted trouble by its union busting attack.

It is negotiating from a position of its bottom line - making losses. It wants to shed around 700 jobs. The deal struck with the Union allows 300 of the workers - previously classed as sacked - to apply for

redundancy at 2.5 times the statutory level. In such a situation where saving jobs is clearly going to be impossible, pushing up the market price of cutting jobs is a rational course for the trade union. However, only half the sacked strikers are likely to get that money, as Gate Gourmet wants to try and ensure that its union-busting sticks. The union continues to campaign to have the remainder reinstated, but this appears unlikely.

The employees were hardly living in the lap of luxury to begin with - catering assistants were pulling in something like £12,000 per annum and drivers around £16,000 - this in the London area with high housing and general living costs. Management even tried to get staff to come back to work signing a new contract on drastically reduced wages and conditions. When it came to the bottom line, they clearly felt they could ask their workers to stoop lower.

It is pointless to criticise unions for not immediately launching a revolutionary insurrection to protect jobs - they are tools for the workers to engage in the labour

market, not revolutionary organisations. Their memberships are of many different political persuasions, workers banded together for the purpose of protecting their interests. If they have to adapt their outcomes to market realities that is the fault of the market, not the union. Wishing that



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union bureaucrats would be replaced with more radical leaders is no way forward; they, too, would only have to abide by the willingness to fight of their membership and the lie of the labour market, just as the hacks do now.

It is not necessarily personal malice on the part of employers that fuels industrial disputes. Both sides are actors on a stage set to determine their actions. The law of 'no profit no employment' means that these sorts of disputes will always occur. The remorseless impersonal logic of the labour market will ensure that. Workers need to understand that no amount of union secondary action - legal or otherwise - can banish this menace from their lives.

To end the evil of the wages system will take a revolution, though - and it's not going to be started by a spark from a small industrial dispute. The revolution needs to be built in the hearts and minds of workers who can defeat both the force and ideology of the dominant class to remake society. Unions cannot make revolutions, only the working class themselves can. Through clear, determined political action, we can clear the way so that no-one need ever go through struggles like the Gate Gourmet workers again. ■

PIK SMEET

While Capitalism Fiddles

I am a difficult person to please when it comes to weather.

Having lived all my life in Britain, I find the climate too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. Imagine my dismay then, when, among the dross and the drivel that passes for television in this country, a recent edition of the BBC *Horizon* programme forecast that within twenty years, Britain's climate could be similar to Alaska's, with 1963-type winters every year, pack ice around the British coast and ice storms regularly bringing down electricity and telephone lines. The effects of global warming are melting the Greenland icecap, and increased rainfall is pouring more water into the great rivers of Siberia, which drain huge areas of Asia and flow northwards into the Arctic Ocean.

The effect of all this extra fresh water at high northern latitudes is to interfere with the circulation of the Gulf Stream, or the 'Conveyor' as it is now known. The Conveyor prevents Britain, which is in the same latitude as Labrador, having a harsh Labrador type climate. Warm water from the Gulf of Mexico crosses the Atlantic, and after warming up Britain and Ireland, continues northwards and ensures that Norway's ports are ice free. The contrast with Sweden could not be starker. Sweden exports much of its iron ore through Norwegian ports, because Swedish ports have a tendency to ice up in the winter, as the Baltic does not get the benefit of the Gulf Stream.

The circulation of the Conveyor is dependent on the water maintaining its salinity. Fresh water does not convey the heat as efficiently. Observations off the Faeroe Islands have

revealed that the cold water returning southwards on its way back to the Caribbean is 20 percent less saline than it should be. Based on these observations, climatologists are forecasting that sometime in the next twenty years, the Gulf Stream could shut off. The results would be catastrophic for the whole of North Western Europe. And this is not merely a scientific theory. The Faeroe Islands studies demonstrate that the process could well have already started.

Nobody can be 100 percent certain that the phenomenon of global warming is due to human activity. What can be said with certainty is that if it is a natural process which would have occurred anyway, capitalism's indifference to the future of the planet is exacerbating a problem which has the potential to end life on Earth. Earth Summit after Earth Summit have achieved little or nothing. While capitalism fiddles, Rome burns; huge holes in the ozone layer, the retreat of the glaciers and rising sea levels are problems that are beyond the ability of capitalism to solve, with its concern for profits, and its competing network of two hundred mini-capitalisms, the nation states.

We may be facing a stark choice: a socialist world community or no world at all. It has long been the view of the Socialist Party that capitalism will not collapse of its own accord; it will have to be abolished. So the victory of the case for socialism depends on a change of climate in political thinking. It would be as well, in terms of our own future, that this should be the only serious climatic change we have to face. ■

GREENIE

Human Welfare No, Profits Yes

It hit the country like a bomb. It was unexpected, unusual and more so coming from what is considered as less endowed members of the community. 27 people had died after consuming illicit brew, brewed, distributed and consumed in the full knowledge of the administration and other leaders. Yes. Just like that. The distributor of the brew, Beatrice Kuvia, was arrested and charged with selling beer without a valid licence. But not with the deaths of 27 souls.

The beer was brewed and laced with chemicals not for the good of the consumers but for profit. And that's where the whole story lies.

The vehicle carrying the otherwise referred to as illicit drink passed through 8 police roadblocks and 10 senior police officers had their palms greased to allow the safe passage to the drink to its consumers. The provincial administration knew the woman distributor had been in the business for as long as the existence of the world. She had been taken to court on numerous occasions but in all these had been let off the hook by being fined and, having the money, was able to pay. At other times, she was released to do communal work. So the judiciary is culpable. Who knows, maybe the judges were corrupted.

This inhuman behaviour is prevalent not only in Machakos where the incident occurred but other parts of Kenya as well. It has been happening because there has been no political or otherwise will to stamp out the behaviour. People are ready to be bribed to do things they'd normally not have done. Poor Kenyans are ready to partake any brew just by looking at the price tag. The said brews cost 10 shillings per 300ml bottle.

But in a capitalist world such things are bound to occur. What is paramount is the money coming out of such transactions, but not the morality of the trade. And unless we come to our senses and know what is the real cause of incidents such as the above, we'll continue to die, be deprived of our rights and remain docile in social situations.

It's time socialism tried to rear its head and dare capitalism and capitalists. ■

PATRICK NDEGE,
Nairobi, Kenya

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Islam and Socialism



The first commie? Mohammed. Being moved in mysterious ways: Galloway



"Socialism and Islam are very close, other than on the existence of God" (George Galloway, Sunday Times, 14 August).

We've heard of Jesus the Socialist. Now it's Mohammed the Socialist. What next? As the MP for Bethnal Green, elected by Muslim votes and with the help of the SWP, Galloway would say this. Even so, it is a curious statement for him, as a Catholic who claims to be a socialist, to have made, acknowledging as it does that socialists don't accept "the existence of God".

Since, like all religions, islam lays down precepts for organising life on Earth as well as on what to do to get to heaven (and avoid hell), is there any basis for Galloway's claim that islam is very close to socialism if its religious side is overlooked?

The French historian and orientalist, Maxime Rodinson, who died last year and who adopted a generally Marxist-materialist approach (even though, like Galloway, entertaining some illusions about Russia), certainly didn't think so. In his *Islam and Capitalism* (1966) (written to

refute the view that islam was an impediment to the economic development of Muslim countries), he wrote:

"Economic activity, the search for profit, trade, and, consequently, production for the market, are looked upon with no less favour by Muslim tradition than by the Koran itself" (p. 16).

"[T]he justice advocated by the ideology of the Koran is not that which socialist thought has established as the ideal of a large section of modern society. Muhammad was not a socialist" (p. 23).

"The alleged fundamental opposition of Islam to capitalism is a myth, whether this view be put forward with good intentions or bad" (p. 155).

"[T]he notion that it is possible to use the traditional concept of property found in the Sunnah, and the relative restrictions it imposes, in order to advocate and promote a move by Muslim societies towards socialist structures . . . is utterly fantastic" (p. 175).

In a previous book (1961), *Mohammed*, Rodinson had provided a materialist explanation of the origins of islam. In Mohammed's time (he was born about 571 of the present era and died in 632), the Arabian peninsula was, we can see now, in a process of transition from tribal society, which was breaking down, to a state, for which Mohammed was to be instrumental in laying the foundations.

As Rodinson described it:

"A mercantile economy was growing up in the chinks of the nomadic world. As well as barter, money transactions using dinars (gold deniers) and dirhams (silver drachmae) were becoming commonplace. The Bedouin borrowed from the rich merchants of the towns, got into debt and were sold into slavery or at any rate reduced to dependent status. The disintegration of tribal society had begun. Large and prosperous markets grew up, like the one at Ukaz, attracting foreigners as well as Arabs from every tribe. The tribal limits had been overstepped".

Mohammed himself, although from a modest background, had become one of the wealthy merchants that had emerged, but he realised that something needed to be done to keep Arab society from completely disintegrating under the impact of the unbridled spread of money-commodity relations. His solution was to create a new Arab community welded together by a new religion that would regulate the emerging money/trading economy by imposing some obligations on the rich and some relief for the poor.

Of course as a mystic, Mohammed was not as rationally calculating as this but expressed himself in religious terms. Thus, in the koran (which he believed was dictated to him by the archangel Gabriel, but which in fact, whether he realised it or not, expressed his own thoughts), the greedy and selfish rich are denounced (it is Allah, the Zeus of the pre-islam Arabian pantheon who Mohammed makes dismiss his fellow gods as fakes, who is purportedly speaking):

"Whoso is mean and bumptious on

account of his wealth,
Who denies the most excellent reward,
We shall smooth his way to ultimate misery.

His fortune shall not profit him when he falls into the abyss"

(Koran xcii, 8-11)

Rodinson describes some of the regulations that Mohammed brought in when in 627, after slaughtering the previous rulers, he became the ruler of Medina:

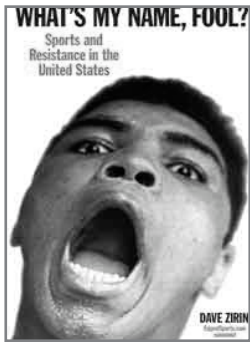
"There are a number of articles laying down fairly strict rules about inheritances. This was apparently necessary in the unsettled situation which resulted from the disintegration of the tribal structure. The stronger must have found it easier to lay hands on the family or tribal possessions of the weaker. The rule of the Koran guaranteed everyone his share, which was worked out in a somewhat complicated fashion. Women were allowed a share in the property. (This seems to have been the custom in Mecca, although not in Medina.). Admittedly their share was only half that of the men . . . Slavery, naturally, persisted. People were urged to treat slaves well and encourage them to gain their freedom. . . . Loans at interest or, more probably, some form of them, were forbidden. This prescription seems in practice to have been aimed chiefly at those who, in the early days of the move to Medina, refused to make loans to the needy without interest . . . But there seems to have been no intention of prohibiting the normal practices of Meccan trade."

So what does Mohammed's "socialism" amount to? Only certain rules to prevent the excesses of the rich from leading to the decomposition of society in 7th century Arabia, but which still accepted the basis of the money/trading economy that had emerged and was spreading. The economic precepts of the koran laid down a framework for the less disruptive functioning of such an economy, placing some obligations on the rich to help the poor while still accepting the division of society into rich and poor.

No doubt it is these limits on the unbridled and selfish accumulation and use of wealth by private individuals that is behind Galloway's claim that "socialism and islam are very close". But this reveals more about his conception of "socialism" than it does about islam. As a former Labour MP, he still thinks in terms of socialism being the control or regulation of capitalism in the interest of the non-rich. But that's not socialism, but reformism. Islam is no more incompatible with this than it is with capitalism. In fact, it is very close to it, except when the religious element which gives its clerics an undue say is brought back. Socialism, properly understood as a non-monetary, non-market society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production, and islam have nothing in common. ■

ADAM BUICK

Dave Zirin: What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States. Haymarket Books, US\$15.00.



What a refreshing change to read a book about sport that isn't a vapid (auto)biography of some 'star' or a jingoistic celebration of the triumph of some national team! Zirin accepts that sport can be used to stop workers from worrying about things that really matter, but also sees how the passion invested in sport can turn it into a site of resistance, an arena where some of the dominant ideas of society can be challenged. While this is something of an exaggeration, his book is still well worth a read.

Zirin traces various kinds of resistance within American sports, concentrating to begin with on opposition to racism. Professional baseball was segregated for decades; not until 1946, when Jackie Robinson played for the Brooklyn Dodgers, did a black American play in a Major League team. Robinson was subjected to horrendous barracking and threats from opposing players and fans, but his ability eventually got him accepted. His criticism of Paul Robeson and his support for the Republican Party show him as a complex individual who was seen by many later black radicals as a 'white man's Negro', but Zirin argues that Robinson's contribution to opposing racism should be respected.

Of course, integrating baseball did not put an end to racism. While still known as Cassius Clay, Muhammad Ali went into a Kentucky restaurant with his 1960 Olympic boxing gold medal around his neck and was refused service. Zirin examines Ali's career, from reviled and persecuted athlete to his current status as 'a harmless, helpful icon'. The book's title comes from what Ali yelled at ex-champion Floyd Patterson, who fought him as a 'patriotic duty' (Patterson was a Catholic in contrast to Ali as a Black Muslim). He was drafted into the army, and his response was 'I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong', at a time when there was little opposition to the US war in Vietnam. As with Robinson, Ali became a 'safe', almost establishment figure, but his earlier legacy is the one that many remember.

If Ali's remark about the Vietcong is famous, probably the best-known image of this period is from the 1968 Olympics, when medal-winners Tommie Smith and John Carlos bowed their heads and raised their fists on the rostrum when the US anthem was played. As Zirin notes, they also wore no shoes (to protest against black poverty) and wore beads (to protest against lynching). They were stripped of their medals and sent home. Zirin interviews Carlos, who for some years had problems earning a living (his wife committed suicide in 1977).

Clearly it took some courage for these individuals (and many others less well known) to stand up for their beliefs, especially in the face of the general

conformity of American society. The same goes for those who support better treatment for gay and female athletes. Zirin reminds us that people can be bigoted in one way but not another: American footballer Reggie White spoke up against white supremacist groups and worked to help drug addicts and ex-convicts, yet he was appallingly homophobic, equating gays with child molesters.

And what of class? This gets relatively little look-in. Unsurprisingly, most owners of professional clubs are extremely wealthy, including George W Bush, former owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team. Professional sport is the tenth largest industry in the US. Aside from a few megabuck-earners, most athletes earn relatively little, and have a shorter life expectancy than average. Baseball players have a strong union, which helped to increase wages and has a reputation for not backing down.

Zirin ends with the reflection that sport could be more cooperative, without the cash incentive and the will to win at all costs, with far less distance between an average person and a star. But, as he says, 'This would require a completely different world.' While his book doesn't elaborate on this alternative, it should at least make you think a bit more about the role of sport under capitalism.

PB

Howard Zinn: A People's History of the United States. Harper Collins. \$18.95



Zinn as a bombardier in World War II

Originally published in 1980 and recently updated, this is the history you don't learn in schools. Zinn, a historian, playwright and social activist, set out to write this book after teaching and 'political

science' for 20 years, half of which time he was involved in the civil rights movement in the South.

Zinn chronicles the passage of time from the arrival of Columbus in 1492 up to and including the election of 2000, cramming each of the 25 chapters with indisputable evidence of man's inhumanity to man under capitalism and empire building. He spells out clearly how cleverly and craftily the ruling elite managed and manipulated their way to accumulating vast fortunes at the expense of the masses, be they indigenous Caribbean or North American Indians, black slaves or the mélange of European immigrants who became today's mostly white populace.

He exposes the lies and spin and self-interest from the time of the first president right through to the current incumbent. He shows how fear, suspicion and discrimination were deliberately harnessed as tools by those with power to set sections of the population against each other in order to pre-empt them joining forces against the real tyrants. The steady march of capitalism

and the two-party system, whilst promoting democracy and wealth for all, have their eyes set only on the twin goals of control at home and control of the world, i.e. democracy for none and wealth for a few.

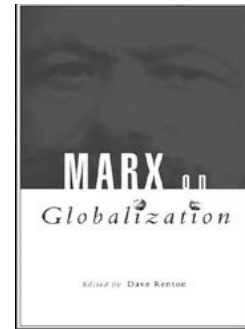
This book is in no way pessimistic; it is factual and points out numerous examples of individuals and groups who have refused to be denied. Zinn cites heartening stories of resistance, protest and refusal to accept the status quo; so many instances where people have demonstrated their opposition to the politics of empire and their support of 'people power'. In fact there is much useful 'ammunition' for proactive socialists here.

His final sentence of the final chapter, post-9/11, attacks, regarding the Declaration of Independence says, "Thus, the future of democracy depended on the people and their growing consciousness of what was the decent way to relate to their fellow human beings all over the world."

The signs are growing all over the world, the people are sick and tired of all forms of empire, the world is ripening for socialism. Let's be ready.

Janet Surman

Marx on Globalisation. Edited by David Renton. Lawrence and Wishart. £13.99.



This is a selection from the writings of Marx and Engels relevant to the global capitalism we are experiencing today, edited and selected by Dave Renton, who provides a short introduction to the whole work and one-page

introductions to each of the sections. Renton doesn't really put any of his own (Leninist) politics in his contributions to the book, which are kept to a minimum. The vast bulk is taken up with selections from works by Marx and Engels. There are extracts from the *Communist Manifesto*, *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, *The Poverty of Philosophy* and *Capital*, as well as a few letters, unpublished drafts and pieces of journalism.

For the first section, on the world economy, Renton uses the 'Bourgeois and Proletarians' chapter of the *Communist Manifesto*. That Marx understood the long-term trends within capitalism to be global in nature can be illustrated by this well known excerpt: "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned . . . the need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere". Marx and Engels were the first writers to understand that the capitalist society would spread and expand.

Marx and Engels didn't use the word 'globalisation', as the term is a recent invention. Though many globalisation

Film Review

Capitalism: No Magic Slipper

theorists argue that the world has now entered into a new economic era, Renton points out that "most commentators would agree that many of the processes being analysed today go back to the old international economy, which has been with us for some time. Such processes as world capitalism, market trade between regions, the growth of finance and new patterns of work, have been part of our life since 1840s, when Marx and Engels began to write". Despite changes and developments, from the nineteenth century to the 21st century, capitalism is still capitalism. In the introduction Renton uses the following quote from Eric Hobsbawm: "Marx and Engels did not describe the world as it had already been transformed by capitalism in 1848; they predicted how it was logically destined to be transformed by it".

The second section, on progress, includes a passage from Marx's *Capital* that describes the origins of the industrial capitalist. This is a good selection, as this is the part of this work that is the most accessible and in many ways the best starting point for anyone reading *Capital* (it has been said that it is best not to read *Capital* starting from the first chapter). This section also includes a speech by Marx from 1848 in which he expresses contempt for both backward-looking protectionism and supposedly progressive free trade (even though in the end he favours free trade but only because he sees it as hastening the contradictions of capital and so the social revolution). Pro-globalisation folk praise free trade and unfortunately many so-called anti-capitalists make the error of advocating some form of protectionism.

In the third section Renton asks whether Marx and Engels did actually believe in the inevitability of one pattern of economic development. In the 1840s they took their examples from Britain and it is often said that they believed the whole world would have followed that lead. But in a letter to Russian socialists Marx wrote that he did not believe that Russia had to follow the English model in forcing the peasants off the land as the first step towards industrialisation, as long as the social revolution had taken place in Europe. In that case, Marx mentioned the possibility of Russia bypassing capitalism and passing to socialism on the basis of the communistic peasant *mir*.

The section on Imperialism counters the argument of some modern globalisation theorists who argue that world capitalism will bring the third world up to the same level of development as the richest western countries.

Renton's book is a good selection of Marx and Engels work relating to the global capitalism of today and it serves well as an introduction to their thought. It would make a good read for someone new to Marx.

Gabriel

Correction

In the review of the books on fascism on page 15 of the August issue, we stated that Maxwell Knight later of MI5 had been director of intelligence of the "British Union of Fascists" in 1927. This should have read of the "British Fascists". The BUF, of course, did not exist at that time - *Editors*.

Make no mistake, *Cinderella Man* is a crackerjack movie which thoroughly justifies the praise lavished on it. The true story of Depression Era boxer James J. Braddock, who rose from the welfare rolls to winning the World Heavyweight Championship, thereby earning his nickname, "Cinderella Man", is totally absorbing and powerfully directed by Ron Howard.

Braddock's story was representative of his time. The movie begins in the late 1920s, when he lived in a nice suburban house and was a leading contender for a world title. It resumes when the Depression was at its worse in the early 30s and Braddock's career was at its lowest ebb, hence his standard of living too. As the Depression gradually recedes, we follow his rise to a shot at the title (at odds of 10-1) and victory over the seemingly unbeatable Max Baer, who was (dis)credited with two ring deaths.

Cinderella Man clearly depicts how tough times were in the early 30s, which doesn't mean it's a happy-go-lucky romp in Elysian Fields today. When Braddock's daughter asks for an extra slice of baloney, Braddock, who hasn't eaten that day, pretends he isn't hungry. When a guy comes to their tenement apartment to switch off the hydro, Mae Braddock (who is unable to pay the gas or milk bills either) attempts to dissuade him. He tells her, "I've got kids too. If I don't switch it off I'll lose my job." Mae and her three children tear the slats off a billboard, for fuel, risking trouble with the authorities.

Though his pride has sustained some fierce body blows, his spirit is unbroken. Braddock's strength comes from his closely-knit family and the belief in his capabilities by Joe Gould, who (unbeknownst to Braddock) sells his own furniture to pay Braddock's training expenses.

As we follow Braddock's new-found success it becomes clear this movie is about the indomitable human spirit. As Ron Howard said recently, "It's a film about people finding the strength to carry on and do the things they have to do." Most of us like to see the underdog triumph, most of us like to see a comeback, and here we have both, therefore, we can enjoy this film. Although it's perfectly OK to enjoy "Cinderella Man", it's not OK to be taken in by it. Sure it's a paean to the never-say-die, gotta give it my best shot feeling that exists in all of us. In that sense it's uplifting and a film in tune with the times we are living in, let alone the 1930s.

But on a deeper level the message of the movie is, "Hey, take it easy buddy, capitalism ain't so bad. Sure there are times when it's tough all over, but if you hang in tough and keep struggling like Jim and Mae Braddock did you'll find things'll work out just fine." This viewpoint was echoed by Russell Crowe on the David Letterman Show on June 8 and has become the main mantra of the media.

On the docks, Braddock befriends an ex-stockbroker who lost his job, mortgage and belief in politicians the day the market crashed. When Braddock suggests things

might improve now Roosevelt is president, his friend replies, "FDR hasn't got me my mortgage back."

In implying that we shouldn't trust politicians, they are saying the right thing for the wrong reason. Politicians of all kinds stand for a continuation of capitalism, a system that causes the conditions within which the Braddock family, like most families, struggled.

The pity of it all is that Braddock, like most members of the working class, didn't learn much, but continued to believe society didn't need changing. In 1928, a year before the Wall Street Crash, he lost \$20,000 when the Bank of the United States went belly-up. This was the year Herbert Hoover was elected president on the promise of continued prosperity. According to Mr. Hoover, "We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land."

Braddock, who was paid \$32,000 for beating Max Baer, eventually gained greater prosperity by a deal that was thoroughly in keeping with boxing's, hence capitalism's, shoddy ethics. When Joe Louis had emerged as the outstanding challenger, Joe Gould informed him he could sign ten percent of his earnings over the following ten years to Gould and Braddock, should he win, or forget about a title fight. Knowing he could be denied a title shot for years because he was black, Louis signed.

Braddock died in his sleep on November 30, 1974 at the age of 69. The next day in the *New York Times*, Red Smith wrote, "If death came easily, it was the only thing in his life that did."

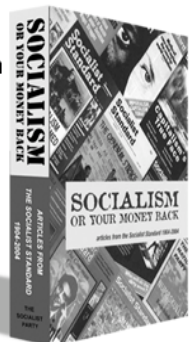
STEVE SHANNON

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LIVINGSTON BY-ELECTION

The Socialist Party stood a candidate in the Livingston by-election, in central Scotland, on 29 September, caused by the death of former "ethical" Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. As it took place while this issue was at the printers we are unable to report the result, but details of the campaign as it progressed and its outcome can be found on the by-election blog at <http://realsocialism.blogspot.com>

ADVANCE NOTICE: NEXT LONDON BRANCHES' CENTRAL MEETING

Saturday, 12 November, 13.30 to 17.00
THE HUMAN REVOLUTION
 Guest Speaker: Chris Knight (Professor of Anthropology, University of East London)
 Chair: Bill Martin (Socialist Party)
 Room 7, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1

A WALK IN RICHMOND PARK AND BY THE RIVER THAMES.

Meet at Richmond Station.
 Sunday **October 23rd 2005** at 11.00 am. For information contact:
 Vincent Otter on **07905 791638** or **020 8361 3017**
 or Richard Botterill on **01582 764929**

AUTUMN DELEGATE MEETING

Head Office, London SW4
 Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th
 October 2005

Discussions include:

- Delegated function within Party democracy
- Socialist analysis of terrorist bombing
- Does the war in Iraq change anything in the Party case?
- Implications for socialism of the end of the oil era
- The roots of irrational behaviour
- Can we afford a paid media officer?
- Should we establish a World Socialist Party of the European Union?

Manchester Branch Meeting

Monday **24 October**, 8 pm
 Hare and Hounds, Shudehill, City Centre
'SCIENCE AND SOCIALISM'

Edmonton

Tuesday **18 October**
RUSSIA: AN ANALYSIS OF RECENT CHANGES
 Speaker: Vincent Otter
 Angel Community Centre, Raynham Road, N18

Norwich

Saturday **5 November**
 Welcome and informal chat for new visitors.
 1pm: Meal
 2pm: Discussion/possibility of forming an East Anglian branch
 3pm: Discussion of ADM items
 3.45-4pm: Recent and future activity
 The Conservatory, back room of The Rosary Tavern, Rosary Rd, Norwich

Fifty Years Ago

4½ PER CENT

No, this is not an article about the 4½ per cent. Bank Rate but about another item of 4½ per cent. that received almost no attention in the newspapers. It had to do with the Government's annual Blue Book on *National Income and Expenditure*, the latest issue, covering the years 1938-1954, being published the first week in September.

For readers who are unfamiliar with the subject matter the Blue Book is not easy to understand; and when not understood its tables of figures can be very misleading as is shown from time to time by Press comments on it. But some

of the tables tell us in precise terms and on official authority things that otherwise can only be conjectured on the basis of part information.

Our present comment is concerned only with the extent to which the "National Income" has increased and the way in which that increase has shown itself in every-day articles of consumption, the food, clothing, entertainment, etc., that concern us from day to day. [...]

It shows that, after allowing for price increase, the purchase of consumption goods (food, clothing, tobacco, rent, entertainment, travel, etc.), was in 1954 only 11 per cent. higher than in 1938. But as the Financial Times (6 September) pointed out, the population had grown by

6½ per cent., so that "real expenditure per head was 4½ per cent up." This, then, is the measure of what capitalism actually performs. When, therefore, the Tory Government, as an election manoeuvre, held out the promise of doubling the standard of living in the next 25 years they are counting on something happening in the future for which there is no support in the past.

(From editorial, *Socialist Standard*, October 1955)



Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.)

by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom,

the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



Thug in suede shoes

Anyone who feels a need to penetrate the Conservative mind should steel themselves to read the letters page of the Daily Telegraph, which is now in the throes of what might be called a debate about the respective appeals of the candidates for the party leadership. A most treasured recent example was a missive, apparently intended to wind up the discussion: "My mother told me never to trust a man who wore suede shoes. Does this advice still hold good?" It would not have needed a particularly sharp mind among the Tory activists to work out that this referred to Kenneth Clarke, who is infamous for, among other things (of which more later), wearing Hush Puppies in preference to the politicians' required footwear of sober, lace-up black shoes. Asked about this highly sensitive matter some years ago, Clarke responded in characteristic style: "The shoes are an act of defiance, because people began to be rude about them and if anything I began wearing suede shoes more often because I was getting advised to stop wearing them". He did not say whether he had also received advice to stop smoking large cigars and to do something about his rumpled clothes and his reputation, which he assiduously cultivates, as an arrogant and insensitive political thug. Rivals

Clarke was at Cambridge with a clutch of aspirant Tory politicians who developed into bitter rivals - Selwyn Gummer, Leon Brittan, Norman Lamont (who Clarke replaced, in the high spot of his career to date, as Chancellor of the Exchequer) and Michael Howard, who now stands between Clarke and the Tory leadership. Before getting into Parliament for Rushcliffe, Clarke fought two elections in the hopeless constituency of Mansfield. In keeping with his self-promoted image as someone who enjoyed a fight, after the first election he promised the Mansfield Tories that he would stay on to contest the seat again. The fact that he was more or less honour bound to do this did not prevent him casting about for another, safer seat. He tried for Edgbaston but the local party preferred Jill Knight; Clarke kept his two-timing a secret and posed as a man whose word was his bond.

When he got into the Commons he commenced an unusually smooth journey up the greasy pole, through minor jobs in the 1980s in the Department of Health, Minister for Employment, Secretary of State for Health, then for Education. He was promoted to Home Secretary in 1992 and, at his peak after the fall of Norman Lamont, Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1993 until the Tories were beaten in the 1997 election. At that time the British economy was emerging from the slump which had seen something like three million unemployed. Clarke's coincident period at the Treasury enabled him to claim to have designed the alleged economic recovery. This is a common ruse among Chancellors of the Exchequer: in a boom they claim the credit for the easier times while in a slump they blame pressures which were out of their control.

Bruiser

During all this time Clarke's aggressive and dismissive manner ensured that the enemies a politician normally accrues would in his case have a particular edge to their enmity. While he was at the Department of Health he riled the doctors with his plans to impose new contracts of employment on them; faced with their resistance he described them as "in the last resort a pretty ruthless lobby". In 1982 he dismissed the nurses' objections to NHS staff cuts with the sneer that "They are a trade union and they don't like the idea of their membership going down at all" (which is true about the Conservatives and any other capitalist party). He infuriated the ambulance crews (as well as substantial numbers of the voters) with his response to their claim for a rise in excess of the 6.5 per cent on offer: "The vast majority of ambulance staff...are professional drivers, a worthwhile job - but not

exceptional at all" (so who would anyone knocked down on the road prefer to see coming to help them - an ambulance crew or Kenneth Clarke?). This arrogance was too much for even the normally supportive Daily Express: "Whatever happened to caring Ken? Instead of the matey, jolly fellow once known to colleagues and public we now have a truculent, bad-tempered bully". Thatcher was no more help to her beleaguered minister; at Prime Minister's Question Time she pointedly avoided agreeing with Clarke about the ambulance crews.

The teachers were another group to fall victim to Clarke's aggression. The changes in schooling introduced by Kenneth Baker in 1998, which had resulted in schools being swamped with minutely detailed instructions on what they should teach, how they should teach it and how they should report on it, had provoked years of hostility between them and the government. To call the situation chaotic hardly did it justice. Clarke arrived at the Department of Education to restore some sort of order, which he started to do in a manner customary to someone described by Thatcher when she moved him to Education, as "an energetic and persuasive bruiser, very useful in a brawl or an election". But Clarke's lack of finesse undid him; in a magazine interview, subsequently picked up by the Daily Mirror, he said that private schools provided a higher standard of education than state schools. Reminded of this comment in a Commons debate by Jack Straw, Clarke intervened with the opinion that the Mirror was a newspaper "read by morons". The Mirror's response was immediate and crushing. "That's two fingers to 8,230,000 voters, Minister" it bellowed and the day after that it ran a telephone poll to establish how its readers rated their Minister of Education - was he a prat or a moron? "Kenneth Clarke was voted a total PRAT last night as 59,000 Daily Mirror readers took part in one of the most fiercely fought elections for years" it crowed, with an unflattering photograph of Clarke as a bully who smoked too much and, at 16st. 9lbs, was unhealthily obese.

Sneers

Michael Heseltine said of Clarke: "He is what he is. You get what you see. And people like that." But what people do not "like" is a politician who rubbishes genuine problems or who regards truth as something to be fashioned in accordance with their needs at any time. In 1980 the American pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly launched a new wonder drug - Oprelvekin - on the market, claiming that among a clutch of beneficial effects it could reduce arthritis pain. In fact Oprelvekin had serious side effects such as liver jaundice, kidney damage and excessive sensitivity to sunlight. There were 76 deaths attributed to the drug, which was later suspended by the Committee on Safety of Medicines. At the time Clarke was Minister for Health. His reaction to the suffering caused by Oprelvekin was to sneer that it was "no more than the patients becoming lobstered". After their crushing defeat in 1997, the Tory party set about electing a new leader. Clarke knew that his views on many issues, especially Europe, would not endear him to the party faithful. (The Daily Telegraph damned him as "the candidate of the past"). In an effort to attract the votes of the right wing, anti-

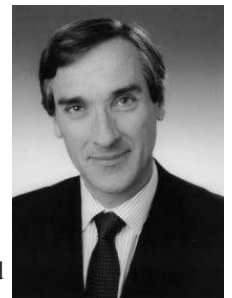


"A truculent, bad-tempered bully" - Daily Express

Europe membership Clarke cobbled up a partnership with the weird Eurosceptic John Redwood - a U-turn too cynical for even the most hardened Tory MP. Now he is again bending what he calls his principles, saying that Europe is not now on the agenda and that his enthusiasm for it is "no longer as constant as the North Star".

Politicians, like salespeople, come in many shapes and styles. Some are reticent and conciliatory. Others are brash, brutal and noisy. Nobody should be impressed by Kenneth Clarke's pose as the man for the people - matey, frank, reliable and human, if engagingly boozy. He has shown himself to be as calculating and dishonest as all the others. There is no more to be hoped for from him, the candidate of the past, than there is from those of the future. ■

IVAN



Redwood - weird



Voice from the Back

The US Is Staying Indefinitely

"The Air Force's top general said Monday that American warplanes would have to support Iraq's fledgling security forces well after American ground troops eventually

Not leaving on a jet plane - the US in Iraq



withdraw from the country.... In an interview earlier this month, General Jumper was even more explicit when asked about the Air Force's future in Iraq. "We will continue with a rotational presence of some type in that area more or less indefinitely", he said. "We have interests in that part of the world and an interest in staying in touch with the militaries over there" (*New York Times*, 30 August). The "interest" they have, is of course, Iraq's oil.

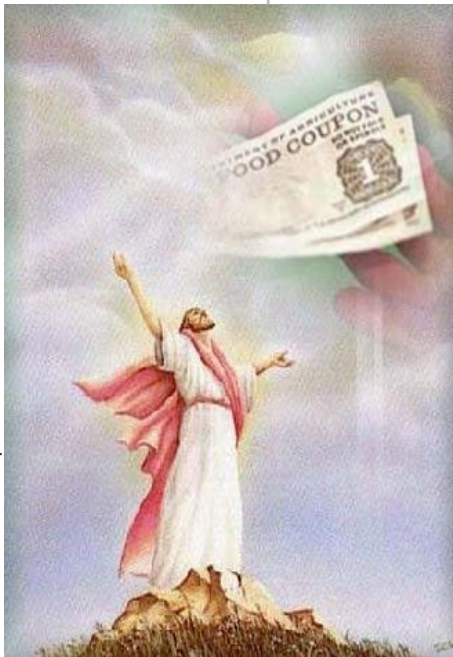
Blessed Are The Warmakers

When the priests and ministers in the USA prattle on about "blessed are the peacemakers" they obviously don't know much about how capitalism operates. "The United States is the largest supplier of weapons to developing nations, a US congressional study says. It delivered more than \$US 9.6 billion in arms to

countries including those in the Near East and Asia in 2004, and boosted worldwide sales to the highest amount since 2000. The total worldwide value of all agreements to sell arms last year was close to \$US 37 billion, and nearly 59 per cent of the agreements were with developing nations, according to the Congressional Research Service report" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 August).

Blessed are the Poor?

Another piece of nonsense much favoured by the bible bashers is "blessed are the poor". Good news then for the pious in the USA according to the latest figures. "The number of Americans living below the poverty line rose for the fourth successive year during 2004, extending the gap between rich and poor in the world's wealthiest nation. At the other end of the scale, a survey of the biggest US companies by compensation consultancy Pearl Meyers found the average payout for chief executives rose 13% in 2004 to \$10.5 million." (*Guardian*, 31 August). You are living in New York on minimum wage? Oh, blessed one! Consult the US Bureau of Statistics.



The Doom Machine

We often hear scares about the likely effects of global warming, but this report seems to come from a reliable source and should scare us all. "Only extraordinary changes in the output of warming gases now and until 2050 would make any difference, Martin Parry told the British Association science festival. The estimates came from a government-funded study by Professor Parry's team at the Hadley Centre, the Met Office's climates forecasting centre" (*Times*, 6 September). The report was carried under the

headline "Ozone rise will doom millions to starvation" and calculated that about 500 million are at risk but by 2050 this would rise to 550 million. Truly, modern capitalism has become a doom machine!

Priorities

"The world's poorest people are being denied access to drugs because pharmaceutical companies are focusing their resources on diseases suffered by wealthy, middle-aged Americans, such as obesity and heart disease, a leading expert will say tomorrow. Dr David Rhodes, the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) head of business development will claim that spiralling costs are driving firms to invest primarily in drugs that tackle diseases of older Americans" (*Observer*, 11 September). This is good business practice according to the ethics of capitalism, a bit tough on those suffering from tuberculosis, malaria and water-borne diseases in the less developed countries, though.

A World In Crisis

The columnist Lee Randall certainly summed up the nightmare of capitalism well when she wrote: "Twirl the globe and stab your finger anywhere. I could spend whole days writing cheques for innocent victims of war, natural disasters, terrorism,



disease or poverty, and it wouldn't be enough. Every tomorrow brings new woes. I'm sure I'm not alone in feeling overwhelmed, uncertain about what can and should be done. But I'm open to ideas" (*Scotsman*, 10 September). How about world socialism, Lee?

Free lunch

by Rigg

